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The Season Ticket

Columbia Theater/Music Center Member Newsletter

VOLUME X, NUMBER 1

OCTOBER 1993

MEMBER CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

Please call (312)663-9465 for reservations to Main Season productions and to confirm performance times for workshop productions. All workshop productions and directing projects are free.

RICHARD II (New Studio)

Previews	October 20 at 7:30
	October 21 at 2:00
Opening Performance	October 22 at 7:00
	October 23, 28, 29, 30 at 7:30
	October 24, 31 at 3:00
	October 26 at 4:00
	October 27 at 2:00

RHINOCEROS (Getz)

Previews	November 10 at 7:30
	November 11 at 2:00
	November 12 at 7:30
	November 13 at 7:30
Opening Performance	November 14 at 7:00
	November 17 at 2:00
	November 18 at 4:00
	November 19 at 8:00
	November 20 at 8:00
	November 21 at 3:00

WORKSHOPS

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Previews	November 13 at 4:00
	November 14 at 4:00
Opening Performance	November 15 at 4:00
	November 16 at 4:00
	November 17 at 6:00
	November 18 at 7:00

Curtains Rising on the Main Stage

Eugene Ionesco's Rhinoceros will be the second production of the season, but the first in the Getz Theater. The show is directed by Brian Shaw, the Assistant Chair of the Theater/Music Department.

Ionesco has called Rhinoceros "a comedy that becomes a tragedy." The story is set in a small town in France in the early sixties and revolves around Berenger, a clerk who drinks too much, doesn't work very hard and is "romantically inept." When the town is besieged by a rampaging rhinoceros one quiet Sunday morning, Berenger and the townspeople find themselves faced with an event that they struggle to comprehend and attempt pathetically to cope with. As the entire town, including his best friend and co-workers, turns into a noisy herd of rhinocerii, Berenger attempts to understand what is holding him back from becoming one himself.

Brian Shaw believes that Ionesco's choice to use a rhinoceros as the transformation animal is because they're "big, pre-historic and forceful." Other than that it seems like an arbitrary choice, there is no real justification for any of the transformations. There is never any concrete reason given as to why the characters change. "Ionesco's decided that it's obvious enough that it doesn't need an explanation. It's better when reasons aren't explained, not knowing is scarier." Brian also feels that these people aren't

generally very self-aware, "they don't think very much about who they are or question themselves very much."

The production will emphasize the theatricality of the script. "That's one of the reasons I like the script, its devices are clearly visible." The techniques will not be hidden, the characters will wear rhinoceros masks, but will stay in the costumes of the characters. Costumes and masks are designed by Patricia Roeder, who also designed last year's production of Translations. The actors will also use false prosthetics, which will give the slight look of puppets to further accentuate the theatricality. The make-up is designed by Dale Calandra. The sets will be "classical" with subdued tones. Somewhat neutral stairs, doorways and levels will allow for greater adaptability. Sets are designed by John Murbach who designed Leocadia last spring. Lights will be designed by Charlie Jolls, making his Columbia debut, who designed Kind Ness, which Brian Shaw directed at the Gallery Theatre. Eric Leonardson, sound designer, also makes a Columbia debut with Rhinoceros. He recently performed a sound performance piece called "Urban Archeology" at the NAME Gallery.

Performance times are: previews November 10, 12 and 13 at 7:30 and November 11 at 2:00. Opening November 14 at 7:00 and running November 17 at 2:00. 18 at 4:00, 19 & 20 at 8:00 and 21 at 3:00. For information and reservations, please call (312) 663-9465.

Lights Up on the Studio

William Shakespeare's Richard II opened the 1993-94 season. The show was directed by Department Chair Sheldon Patinkin in the New Studio Theater from October 20 through October 31.

Richard II is a tale of power and the divine right of kings, a story that is still relevant to today's political scene: "When is it right to have a revolution, and is it ever right to have one?" With the current situations in all political spheres, including Haiti and Somalia, these questions are still very much an issue.

The play is set in the years 1398-1400, and is kept in its period. "I spent a long time thinking about parallels that were exact in time and space and couldn't find any which were specifically parallel to the central issue in the play. It's a religious issue," says Sheldon. It's also a school production, and Sheldon believes that the best approach is to go back to square one on how Shakespeare is done. Shakespeare also takes a large range of large emotions. "I wanted to be able to go full out emotionally, and to do that in ten or twelve line sentences. In order to accomplish that, and to capture the power of it, it really needs to remain in its original context."

Sheldon generally doesn't agree with changing the time and place, or changing anything really, unless it fully supports the play. "I think a lot of changing that's done

today puts the director between the play and the audience. I don't think that's my job. If I'm helping the play by changing anything, I'll do it."

The language doesn't seem to be a problem for anyone, either. "It won't sound absolutely contemporary to anyone." But it's the story that is most important in any play, be it Shakespeare or something more contemporary. It does take listening more intently on the audiences part, as "the thoughts being expressed took many more words than we're used to needing." What happens within the play is very clear, the story and the meaning are easily understood, even by people who have never heard or read Shakespeare before. "Shakespeare didn't write literature, he wrote plays for a very demanding, very vocal audience that expected to be entertained."

The sets are designed by alumnus Randall Keller, costumes by Faculty Member Frances Maggio, lights by David Gipson and sound by John Cashman. The combat was choreographed by Artist-in-Residence David Woolley, who teaches combat classes at Columbia, and the production is stage managed by former student Viola Pastuszyn. Previews are October 20 at 7:30 and October 21 at 2:00. Opening is October 22 at 2:00 and runs October 23, 28, 29 and 30 at 7:30, October 24 and 31 at 3:00, October 26 at 4:00 and October 27 at 2:00. All tickets are \$2.00, for reservations or information, please call (312)663-9465.

Faculty Spotlight

The first show Henry Godinez was in when he moved to Chicago ten years ago was Kabuki Medea at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre. He is now appearing as Jason in a re-staging of the same production which is currently running at Wisdom Bridge, which also features fellow faculty member Barbara Robertson as Medea.

Henry was born in Cuba, but his family moved to Miami when he was three years old. They lived there for a year before moving to Dallas, Texas, where he grew up. He became interested in theater in high school, and continued in college, receiving his B.A. from the University of Dallas. From there, he went to Louisville to apprentice at the Actor's Theatre of Louisville for one year before going on to get his Masters from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Professional Theatre Training Program in 1984.

Henry has worked extensively with Shakespeare Repertory here in Chicago. He played the role of Edmund in last year's production of King Lear, and has recently performed in The Tale of Cymbeline, Much Ado About Nothing, King John, and Shakespeare's Greatest Hits. The last was a show geared towards younger audiences and was performed at various locations this summer, including Grant Park, and the Ruth Page and Royal George Theaters. Henry feels that Shakespeare is the "infinite challenge." The challenge of trying to make something so heightened seem natural and real. "You're dealing with

huge, universal themes and emotions in a real way." The language is "infinitely perfectible," there are things constantly being discovered, meanings and ways of saying each line. "You never stop learning."

That is also one of the things he enjoys most about teaching. "As a teacher you learn so much. I've been acting so long, yet I've never had to explain why I do things the way I do them. It gives you great ideas of new things to try." He believes in allowing the student to ease into it when teaching Shakespeare. "I want them to feel like it's a rehearsal more than a class. This gives more of a practical application." There are also some students who haven't had any experience with Shakespeare yet; he really wants these students to feel comfortable with it. "With teaching, like acting, you keep discovering more and more-- the challenge of life is to keep going up and up and up."

Henry for three or four years worked with young people for a social service agency program called "Youth Guidance." Teams of social workers work with kids in Chicago Public High Schools, and each team has one artist. Henry was on the Albany Park team at Roosevelt High School. "It was a great challenge working with high school students; they taught me a lot."

Henry is co-founder and Artistic Director of a company called Teatro Vista, which literally translated means "theater with a view." They have no permanent home, but

have been performing at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum and at Victory Gardens. The company focuses on works by Latino authors. This spring they will be doing a co-production with the New American Theatre in Rockford of The Grapes of Wrath.

Henry is also very interested in Stage Combat, which he became involved with at college. He has learned everything he knows while doing shows and has been the fight captain in almost every show he has done with any combat in it. He has had extensive movement training. "If you're strong and agile and in tune with your body, you can pick up anything."

Faculty Spotlight

Bobbi Wilsyn has been singing since about age four, privately even earlier, but publicly since then. Growing up in Los Angeles, she started singing in church and at school. Before long, she was a featured soloist at her church, and was paid to sing at weddings. Bobbi was only twelve the first time her vocal coach, who was the accompanist, hired her to sing at a wedding. With no formal training, she was eventually asked to direct the church choir.

Bobbi attended California State University, Los Angeles as a theater major with a music minor. She began auditioning and singing at different clubs in L.A. in her early 20s, and soon went on the road with a "popular lounge act," which is very different from what we

think of as a lounge act now. "It's funny when I say that now. I always picture Bill Murray on Saturday Night Live." In Las Vegas the clubs are called lounges because that is often what they are, a lounge in the hotels that generally have 24 hour entertainment. "Sometimes your show would be at 7 in the morning. They don't have clocks on the walls in Las Vegas so the gamblers will keep gambling." She was on the road for four or five years, and her travels eventually brought her to Chicago, where she played clubs such as the Ritz Carlton, the Playboy Club, and the Back Room on Rush Street. "I got tired of road life, but I had been away from L.A. for so long that it would have been starting all over again." She started to approach club owners and entertainment directors. The owner of the Back Room hired her and other owners and directors would come see the show, which was called the "Bobbi Wilsyn Show." Bobbi developed her own following with a jazz trio.

Gloria Morgan soon became her accompanist. While playing for Bobbi, she became a part-time faculty member at Columbia College teaching chorus. She asked Bobbi to help with the Christmas program, knowing of her directing background. The two split Gloria's salary. The chorus sang on the third floor of the Theater/Music building the day of the grab-bag exchange and Department Chair, Sheldon Patinkin, was very impressed. The word got to William Russo, the head of the Music Program, who gave them a challenge. If they could get 20 people to sign up for chorus, he would get the budget

to pay them both for co-teaching. That semester, 40 people signed up. At one point, the chorus grew to 60 or 70 students.

Carol Loverde, head of vocal instruction, hired Bobbi to teach Private Voice Lessons and Techniques in Singing I. After about 5 years, she became an Artist-in-Residence and now teaches 4 classes a semester, including Music Theory, Sight-singing I, Vocal Performance Ensemble, Advanced Chorus and Music Workshop. She has been featured in several Music Program productions such as Terra: An Homage to the Music of Brazil and both Jazz Panorama and Chelsea Bridge. She has recently been a featured soloist with Columbia College's Chicago Jazz Ensemble, which performed last year with the Joseph Holmes Dance Company at the Civic Opera House in Listen Beneath.

Bobbi still enjoys being a singer/actress. She has performed in Beehive at the Briar Street Theatre, in which she portrayed Diana Ross, Tina Turner and Annette, and Sophisticated Ladies at Drury Lane Oak Brook Terrace. She has also been working on an adaptation of a musical with department accompanist David Rice.

Bobbi will be presented in concert at Columbia College during the spring semester. The concert is being produced by H E Baccus, Assistant Director of the Music Department.

She enjoys teaching because she says it's the best way to learn. She has been married for 8 years. "I have no kids, except for approximately 75 each semester."

What's News

Theater faculty member David Cromer is directing The Language of Birds: Rosa Luxemburg & Me, which was written and performed by Donna Blue Lachman and opened October 15 at the Blue Rider Theater.

Accompanist David Rice spent his summer playing piano on the Odyssey cruise ship and playing jam nights at Buddy Guy's Legends. He is currently planning a tour of Europe with the Legendary Otis Rush Blues Band and is transcribing "Fair Lady" for fellow faculty member Bobbi Wilsyn.

Department Chair Sheldon Patinkin is preparing a mini-series of concerts for the National Jewish Theater of three evenings of composers Harold Arlen, George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein's songs. The series is called They Wrote American. He has been nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award for his direction of Puttin' on the Ritz.

Henry Godinez, and artistic consultant to the department, is currently appearing in Kabuki Madea at Wisdom Bridge Theater and will be in The Grapes of Wrath at New American Theater in March.

William Russo, Director of the Contemporary American Music Program, participated in a three day jazz festival, an homage to Hans Koller, called "Hans Koller, the Man Who Plays Jazz," in Vienna on September 25-27. The Birmingham Royal Ballet performed a new ballet, "Street," based on Mr. Russo's "Street Music." It will be

performed in England Six more times next month.

Producing Director Mary M. Badger designed the lights for Food From Trash for American Blues Theatre. The show ran in September to coincide with the opening of A.B.T.'s new performance space. She co-chaired a panel on Theatrical Design with Larry Schoeneman for the Joseph Jefferson Committee's 25th Anniversary Celebration on September 13. Also Mary designed lights for Sight Unseen at National Jewish Theater, which is being directed by Susan Padveen, the Director of Audience Development for the Theater/Music Department, and features faculty member Jeff Ginsberg, and opened October 18.

Chuck Smith directed Eden at the Victory Gardens Theater, which features alumnus Keli Garret. He will also be working on a "Voices In History" program at the Chicago Historical Society which begins October 4 and is directing A Christmas Carol at the Goodman Theatre.

Artist-in-Residence Terry McCabe directed Tour de Farce which ran at the Wisdom Bridge Theater through September and can now be seen at the Apollo Theater.

Part-Time Faculty member Bette Coulson gave a workshop for the Chicago Area Music Teachers on September 10. She was also part of a piano quartet called "Pianola Quartet" that gave a concert at the University of Illinois in July and will be performing on October 25 with Eveleyn Binz as the Lakeside

Piano Duo at the Winnetka Music Club.

Artist-in-Residence Paul Amandes is currently appearing in Judevine at the Equity Library Theatre for which he also composed and directed the music. Over the summer Paul performed in City of Angels at the Drury Lane Oak Brook Terrace and will be playing the role of Bob Cratchit in A Christmas Carol at the Goodman Theatre with fellow faculty member Tom Mula as Scrooge.

Tom Mula also directed Romeo and Juliet for the Oak Park Festival Theatre, for which he is Artistic Director.

Part-time faculty member Nana Shineflug was one of the 8 artists chosen to work with 50 Chicago Public School teachers for the Chicago Arts Collaborative for Teachers this summer, and she choreographed "Transforming Sexton." Her dance company, The Chicago Moving Company, will do a 3 week residency in Arlington Heights at the end of October and will perform at the Dance Center of Columbia College at the end of January.

Current students Steve Walker, Chas Vrba, Chris Ellis, Matt O'Neil and former student Carol Luat performed an original comedy revue called Cathode Raygun at A Red Orchid Theatre this summer. The show was directed by student Simeon Schnapper. Simeon also performed Improv in South Africa this summer with Frances Callier.

Students Heather Donaldson, Mark Montgomery, Allison Cain and former students Brett

Radford, Jennifer Pompa, David Bryson, John R. Pierson, and Amy E. Flaherty appeared in Dark Ride by Len Jenkin at Cafe Voltaire, directed by former student Mark A. Fossen.

Staff

Editor: Pam Klier

Contributors: H.E. Baccus
Henry Godinez
Susan Padveen
Sheldon Patinkin
William Russo
Brian Shaw
Bobbi Wilsyn